

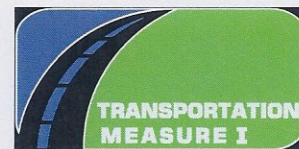


San Bernardino Associated Governments

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- San Bernardino County Transportation Commission •San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
 - San Bernardino County Congestion Management Agency •Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies
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Notice of Preparation

April 10, 2012

To: Agencies, Organizations,
and Interested Parties

From: Mitchell A. Alderman, P.E.
Director of Transit & Rail Programs
SANBAG
1170 W. 3rd Street, 2nd Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92410-1715

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment for the Redlands Passenger Rail Project

The San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) is the Lead Agency for the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the Redlands Passenger Rail Project (RPRP or project). The EIR's purpose is to identify the significant effects on the environment of a project, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided. The EIR addresses the environmental issues associated with the proposed Project. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an Environmental Assessment (EA) will be prepared as a joint document with the EIR. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the Lead Agency for the NEPA process.

The purpose of this Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to notify agencies, organizations, and individuals that SANBAG plans to prepare a Draft EIR and to request input on the environmental analysis to be performed. From public agencies, we are requesting comments on the scope and content of the environmental information, which is germane to each agency's statutory responsibilities with regard to the project. We are also requesting interested individuals' or organizations' views on the scope of the environmental document.

No Initial Study Checklist has been prepared for the project. Based on a preliminary review of the project corridor and in consideration of the project activities, SANBAG has determined that potentially significant impacts may occur as a result of project implementation. In this instance, because the Lead Agency has decided to prepare an EIR, preparation of an Initial Study is not required by CEQA. SANBAG will prepare a Draft EIR as authorized by Section 15060(d) of the State CEQA Guidelines. The EA will be prepared in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500), Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the joint Federal Transit Administration (FTA)/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulations (23 CFR 771), Environmental Impact and Related Procedures. In addition to the potentially significant impacts that were determined by SANBAG for the EIR, the EA will analyze the potential impacts related to acquisitions/displacements and environmental justice per the requirements of NEPA.

Project Location and Environmental Setting:

The project proposes to re-introduce passenger rail service along the existing railroad right-of-way (ROW) owned by SANBAG from the City of San Bernardino on the west to the City of Redlands on the east, in southwestern San Bernardino County, California (see Figure 1, Regional Map). This right-of-way is commonly referred to as the "Redland Branch Line" and is also commonly referred to as the "Redlands Subdivision, Redlands Spur, or Redlands Corridor." The entire Redlands Corridor is an approximately ten mile rail segment that extends from the

*Cities of: Adelanto, Barstow, Big Bear Lake, Chino, Chino Hills, Colton, Fontana, Grand Terrace, Hesperia, Highland, Loma Linda, Montclair
Needles, Ontario, Rancho Cucamonga, Redlands, Rialto, San Bernardino, Twentynine Palms, Upland, Victorville, Yucaipa
Towns of: Apple Valley, Yucca Valley County of San Bernardino*

Santa Fe Depot in the City of San Bernardino to the University of Redlands in the City of Redlands. As a part of this project, most of the existing railroad infrastructure would be reconstructed as described in more detail below. The Project Study Area for the RPRP extends from E Street in the City of San Bernardino to Cook Street in the City of Redlands. This linear corridor area will be evaluated in the EIR/EA and is generally limited to the existing railroad ROW and, in limited instances, areas immediately adjacent (e.g. generally less than 200-feet from the rail ROW).

Project Description:

The Project would include the development of new railroad infrastructure along an approximate nine-mile section of rail corridor owned by SANBAG and part of the former Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe (now the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF)) Railroad's Redlands Subdivision. SANBAG purchased this piece of the railroad along with others in the County from the BNSF in 1993 along with other agencies in Southern California and as a part of the divestiture of the physical assets of the BNSF. The Project would include the development of four new stations consisting of boarding platforms with supporting amenities, parking, and pedestrian access improvements. The Project would include a new train layover/storage facility with storage tracks, a vehicle wash, a 10,000 square foot building, and ancillary facilities. Track upgrades would include signal improvements, replacement or retrofit of four existing bridge structures, and approximately 28 at-grade highway-rail crossings. Some existing at-grade highway rail crossings may be closed (blocked off) as a part of the Project. The Project would also involve culvert replacements and extensions, utility replacements and relocations, and implementation of safety warning devices. Passenger rail service would occur from five stations located at E Street and Tippecanoe Avenue in the City of San Bernardino and New York Street, Orange Street (Downtown Redlands), and University Street (University of Redlands) in the City of Redlands. The station platforms at E Street would be constructed as part of a separate project that would extend Metrolink service east from the Santa Fe Depot.

The Project alternatives would be constructed within the corridor identified in Figure 2, RPRP Study Area. SANBAG proposes the construction of a single track with a one-mile long passing siding located near the midpoint of the alignment. Project components would include the following with construction planned to start in 2015:

- Track Improvements. Proposed track improvements include a redesign of the existing single track alignment and track ballast and subgrade foundation from E Street in San Bernardino to Cook Street in Redlands. Existing rail and railroad ties will be salvaged as part of the Project.
- E Street, Tippecanoe Avenue, New York Street, Downtown Redlands, and University of Redlands Rail Stations. The proposed rail stations will include the installation of new station boarding platforms (with the exception of the E Street Station), ticket vending machines, a shade canopy with some seating, accessible walkways to the public right of way or parking area, lighting, and parking area(s).
- Grade Crossings. Twenty-eight (28) existing highway-rail at-grade crossings and two (2) existing grade separated crossings are within the limits of the project and may be modified to improve and update the safety warning systems at each crossing. Some crossings may be closed to improve roadway related safety associated with the project. The two existing grade separated crossings of Interstate Route 10 will remain.
- Parcel Acquisitions and Relocations. Acquisition of additional right-of-way is required. At this time, SANBAG is not certain on the number of affected parcels as the project is currently in preliminary design phases. In some instances, the acquired parcels may contain active businesses requiring relocation.
- Culvert Replacements, Extensions, and Relocations. Drainage facilities along the rail corridor, such as culverts that extend under the existing railroad track, will require replacement, extension, or relocation. New culverts may be added to improve drainage across (under) the rail corridor.
- Utility Replacement and Relocation. Storm drains, sewer lines, water lines, under drains, railroad signal houses, street lights, power poles and conductors, telephone and/or fiber optic communications lines, commercial billboards, and an oil line will require replacement, relocation, or extension.
- Traffic and Rail Signals. Additional rail and traffic signals will be installed for the corridor based on the final project design. The new passenger rail system will operate under Automatic or Centralized Traffic Control (ATC or CTC) with a single passing siding. A new communications fiber optic backbone communications line will be constructed within the railroad corridor.

- **Rail Operations.** An operating plan has been developed using Rail Traffic Controller (RTC) modeling and operational analysis based on input from SANBAG, Metrolink, and BNSF. Operations are projected to commence in 2018. Passenger rail service would utilize previously owned rail vehicles consisting of a single trainset composed of one locomotive and up to two cars (see Figure 3, Train Consist).
- **Maintenance.** Typical railroad maintenance will be required during the operational phase of the project and would be completed from a centralized layover facility proposed to the west of California Street; immediately south of I-10.

Alternatives:

The EIR/EA will include consideration of alternatives to the Project consistent with the requirements of CEQA and NEPA. At this time, SANBAG anticipates that this may include the consideration of a No Project/Action Alternative and an Alternative Layover Facility Location. Other build alternatives may also be considered.

Potential Environmental Effects of the Project:

The potential environmental effects of the project include, but are not limited to, the following: aesthetics, air quality/greenhouse gases, biological resources, cultural resources, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, noise, acquisitions/displacements, environmental justice, and transportation/circulation. These topics will be analyzed in the EIR/EA.

Scoping Meeting:

The NOP 30-day public review period for this project begins on April 10, 2012 and ends on May 12, 2012. Two scoping meetings are scheduled to occur during the course of the 30-day NOP public review period. These meetings will be held at the following locations located along the RPRP Study Area:

- April 24, 2012, 5:00–7:00 PM. ESRI Café, 380 New York Street, Redlands, CA 92373
- May 2, 2012, 5:00–7:00 PM. San Bernardino Hilton, 285 East Hospitality Lane, San Bernardino, CA 92408, University Room

Responses to this Notice of Preparation:

This NOP is being circulated pursuant to California Public Resource Code Section 21153(a) and the State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15082. Public agencies and the public are invited to comment on the proposed scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR/EA. A 30-day comment period is provided to return written comments to SANBAG. Written responses and comments will be accepted until May 12, 2012. Please include the name of the project in the subject heading and the name of a contact person in your organization, if applicable. Please send written comments to:

Mitchell A. Alderman, P.E.
Director of Transit & Rail Programs
SANBAG
1170 W. 3rd Street, 2nd Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92410-1715.

Your comments may also be sent by e-mail to RPRP_Public_Comments@sanbag.ca.gov.

Project Applicant:

Per Section 15367 of the State CEQA Guidelines, a Lead Agency is defined as “the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project.” In the case of the RPRP, the Lead Agency is SANBAG for compliance with CEQA. FTA is the Lead Agency for compliance with NEPA.

Signature: Mitchell A. Alderman

Date: 4/6/12

Title: Director of Transit & Rail Programs

Telephone: (909) 884-8276

References:

California Environmental Quality Act

1970. CEQA Statute, California Public Resources Code § 21000 et seq.

Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration

2009. Environmental Impact and Related Procedures, 23 CFR Part 771.

National Environmental Policy Act

1966. NEPA, Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act (49 USC 303).

SANBAG

2007. Redlands Passenger Rail Station Area Plans.

2003. Redlands Rail Feasibility Study.



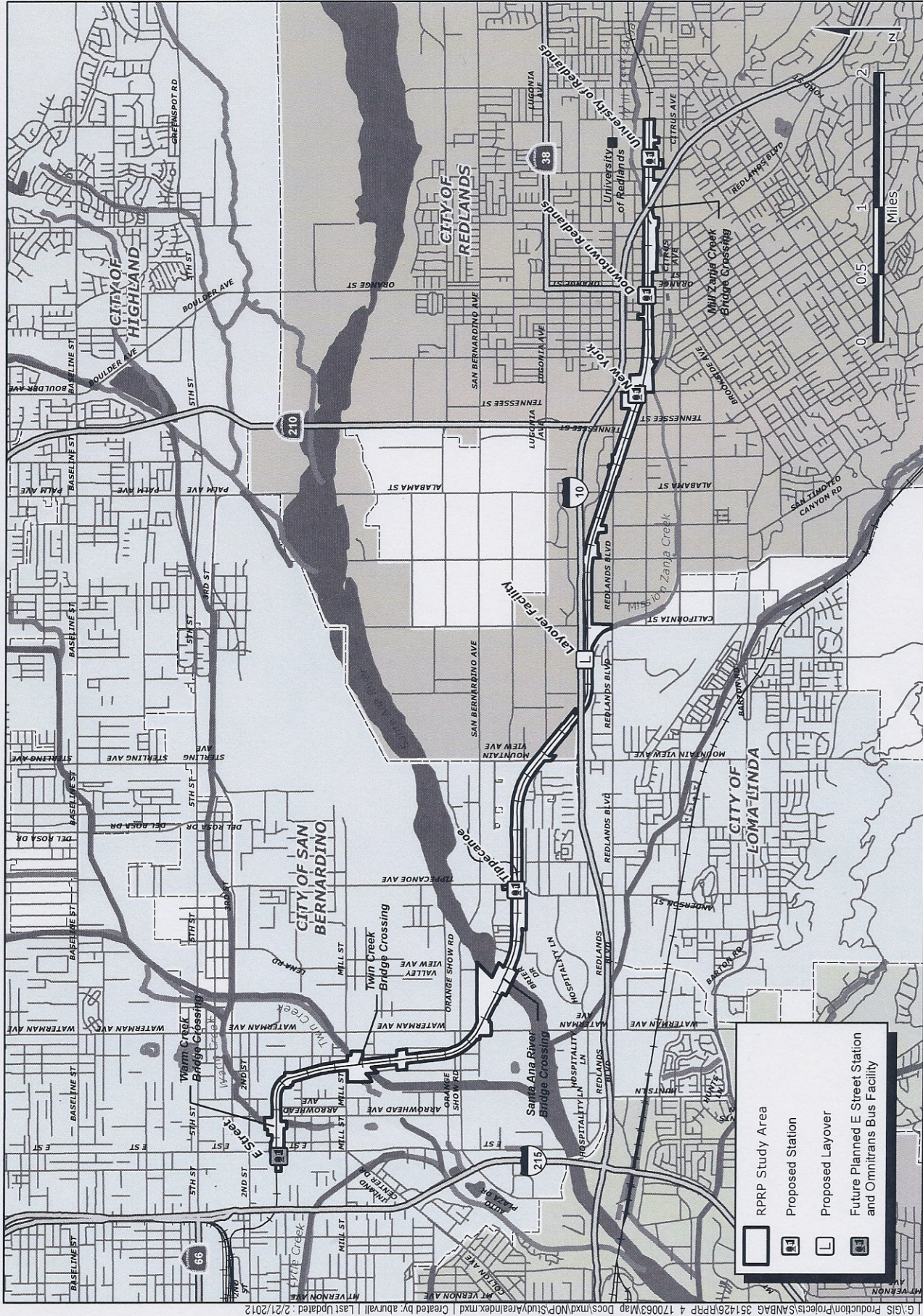
Regional Location and Project Area
FIGURE 1

SANBAG/FTA | Redlands Passenger Rail Project | NOP



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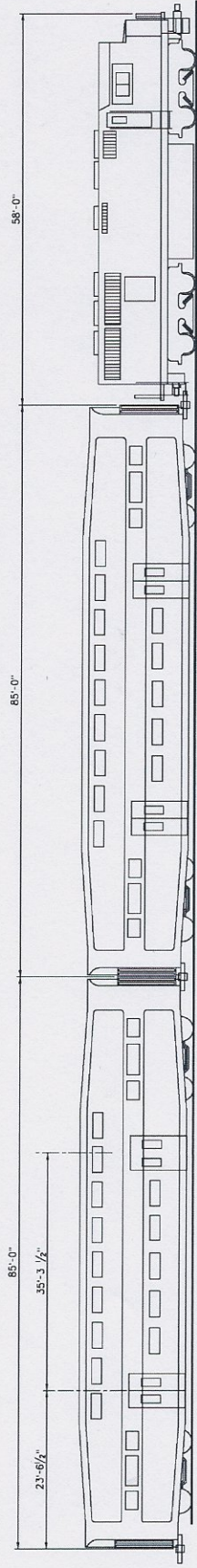
RPRP Study Area
FIGURE 2

SANBAG | Redlands Passenger Rail Project | NOP

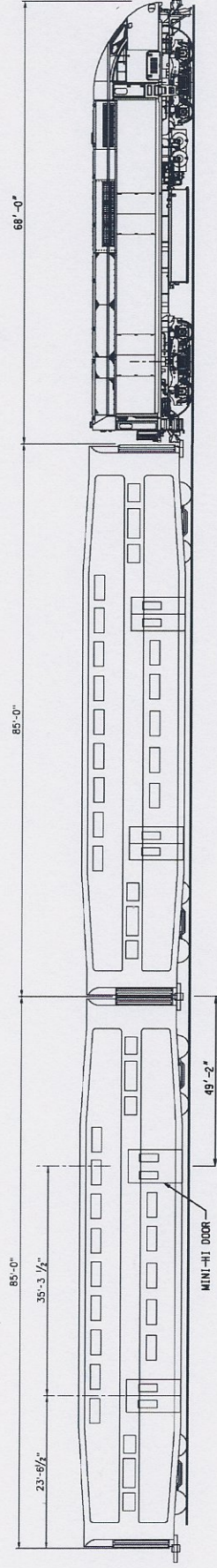


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GM F59PH LOCOMOTIVE & BOMBARDIER CAR



GM MP36PH LOCOMOTIVE & BOMBARDIER CAR

Train Consist

FIGURE 3